

THE APOCALYPSE REVEALED

A Gnostic Christian Reading of the Revelation to John of Patmos

by

Phillip Medhurst

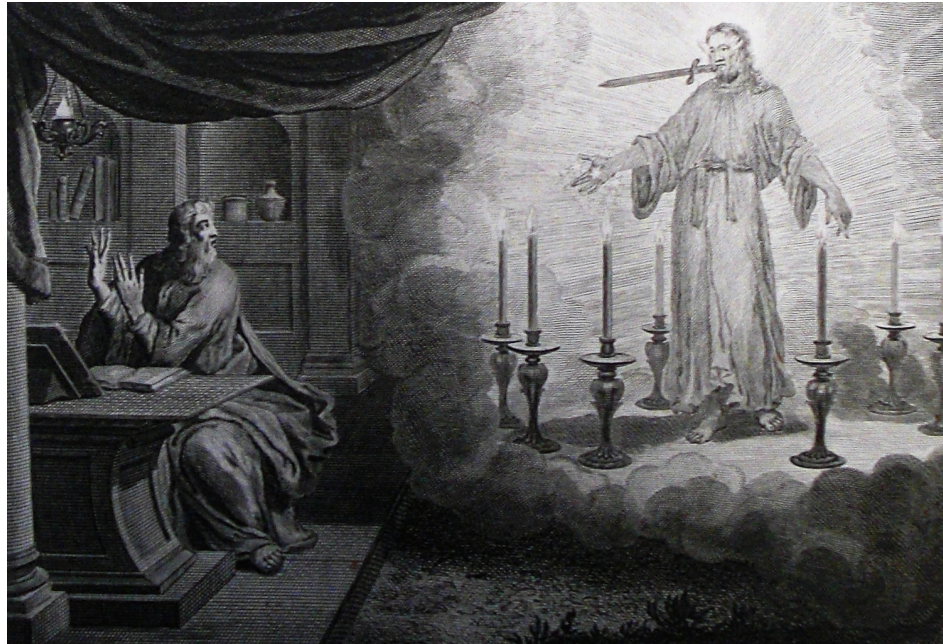
with 17 illustrations of the Book of Revelation by Jan and Caspar Luyken

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Opposite: Revelation chapter verses 12-16. The Word issues from Jesus the son of God, the Gnosis incarnate

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THE REVELATION OF JOHN ILLUSTRATED BY JAN AND CASPAR LUYKEN

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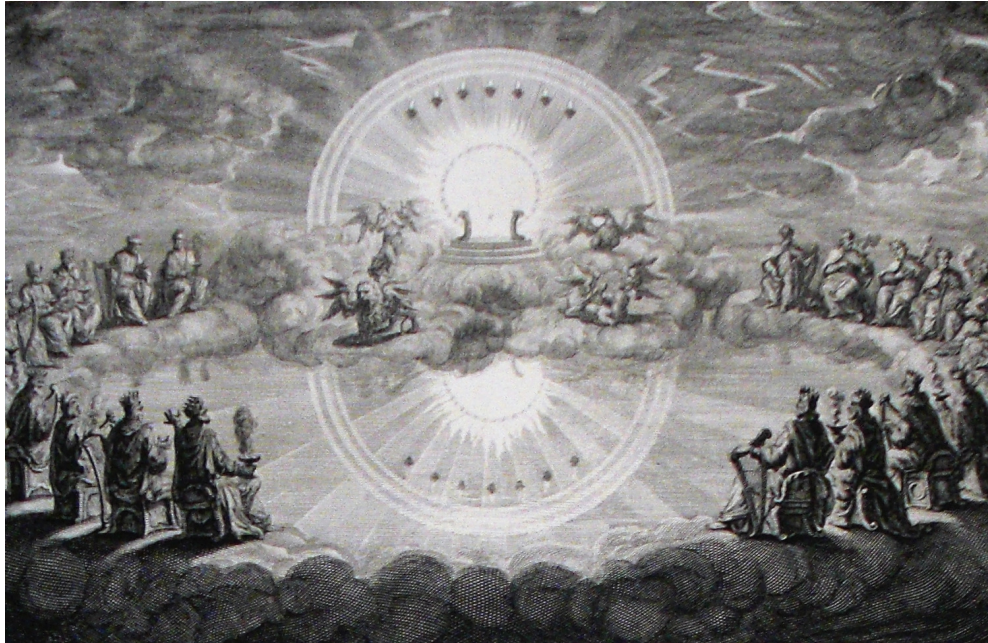
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1. Man has the Divine within him. Spiritual Truth is located within the deeper recesses of the mind rather than on the shallow surface of consciousness. It manifests itself as story or tableau the meaning of which is not always easy to articulate in rational terms. Indeed, such Truth may be altered and so distorted by “worldly” considerations such as the material needs of a professional priesthood, the maintenance and upkeep of buildings, and the requirement of hierarchies to be seen to be historically consistent in their utterances. But the spring cannot be dammed: the underground stream of stories, images and symbols – dreams dreamed, remembered and re-incarnated in word, paint or stone – will continue to gush forth.

Opposite: Revelation chapter 4 verse 1. God’s heavenly throne surrounded by the 24 Elders of Spiritual Israel

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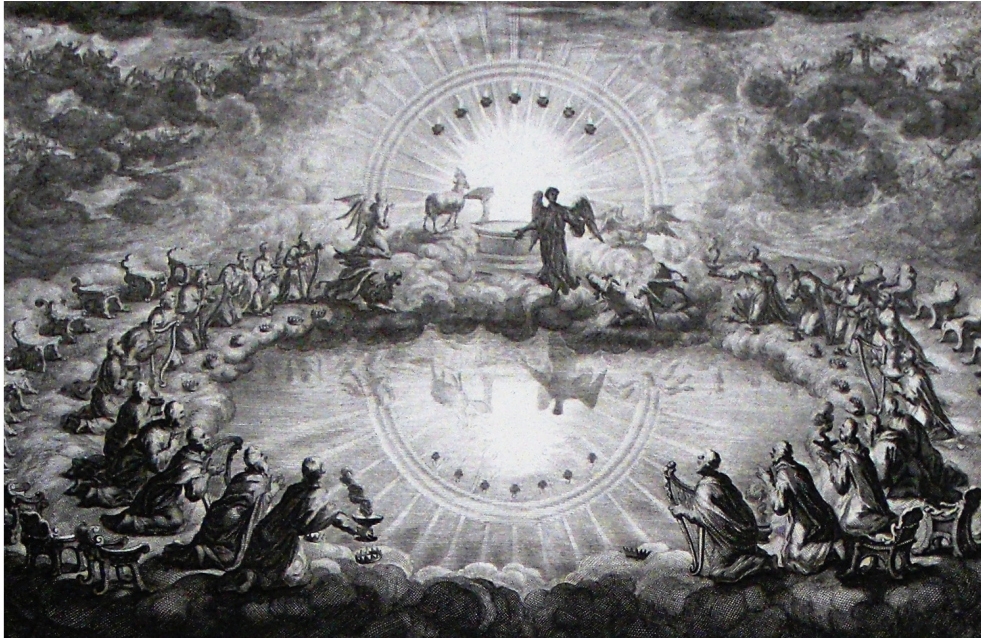


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2. One such incarnation is the Apocalypse of John of Patmos. Unsurprisingly, visions here of the end-time are reflections of dreams of the beginnings. In both, the number seven is key as the time-sequence of the primal story, and light is the symbol by which all other symbols are seen. And yet, as if to emphasise the fact that Truth is not located in sequential order and rational lucidity, the Apocalypse constantly subverts sequence and reason in its presentation of material: the orderly and light-filled procession of the story of creation has become a nightmarish jumble, a reflection of the creation-story seen in a glass darkly – as darkened by sin and as rendered a counterfeit of God's intended order.

Opposite: Revelation chapter 5. Understanding comes only to those like the Lamb who suffer for the Gnosis

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3. In the beginning Wisdom (Sophia) proceeded from God and created matter, energy and time (Proverbs 3:19-20, 8:22-31). Matter had rudimentary structure and time existed as sequence, but neither was purposeful. It was only when God spoke His Word that the order of the days of creation commenced. The Alpha of that Word was Light. Light was the prime creation. This “Light” was not the light we see: rather, it was the Light by which we see light (Psalm 36:9). The light we see came into being when the light-emitting bodies were formed on the fourth day (Genesis 1:14). Rather, the first Light was (and is) spiritual consciousness, the Gnosis which ordered Sophia’s creation and which is conscious both of itself and of its Creator.

Opposite: Revelation chapter 6 verses 9-11. The Fall initiated God’s continuous judgment on the created order

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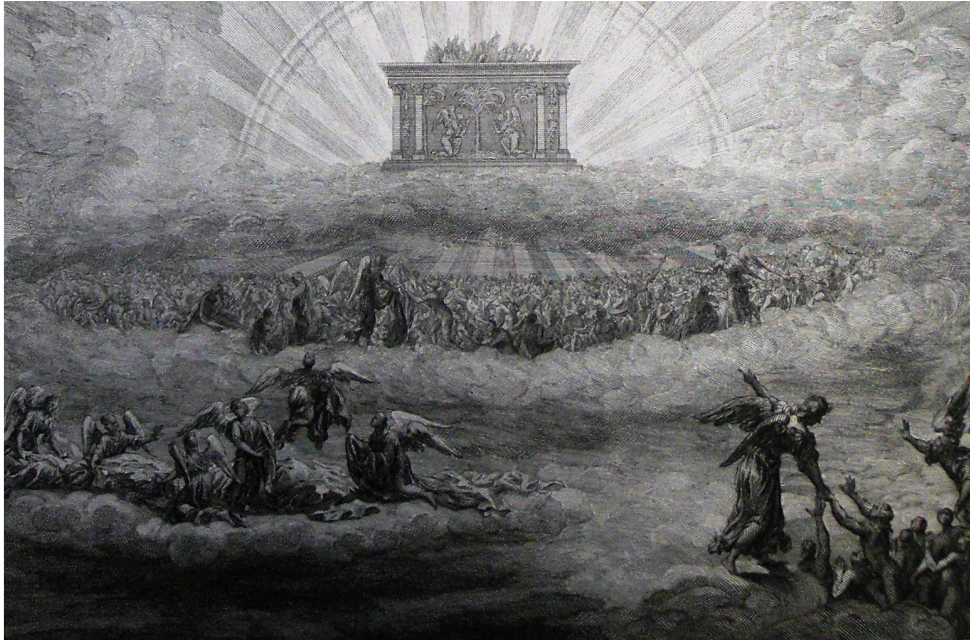


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4. This Light brings about eternal Life (John 1:4; 1 John 1:5). It has been manifested in these latter days in and through Jesus of Nazareth, and, before him in time collectively in the 144,000 Gnostics of spiritual Israel (Revelation 22:13). Once this Light was shed upon matter and time, the various forms of creation could arise in a hierarchy during the six “days” of the issuing-forth of the universe. When that process was completed, the created order could function independently of its Creator, and God could, on the seventh day, “rest”. The Fall initiated the reverse process, one of entropy and occlusion, culminating in the final Omega of the Word of destruction, when the light emitted will be the glare of the lake of fire.

Opposite: Revelation chapter 6 verses 9-11. Higher Truth cries out for the justice denied by the carnal world

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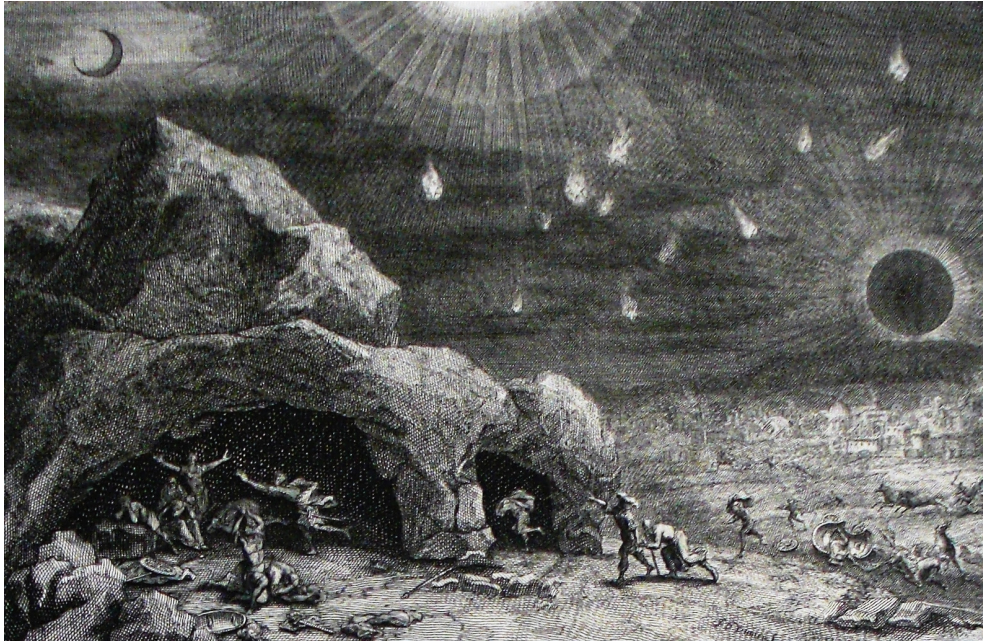


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5. Adam and Eve were able to eat all the trees of the Garden that were available for their food, except the Tree of the Knowledge of Good and Evil. These trees included the Tree of Life, conferring immortality. But as result of their disobedience, God passed a sentence of death. The pair did not die immediately: the sentence took the form of an exclusion from the Tree of Life. Adam then went on to live 930 years reckoned in mortal time. If Adam was 70 years old – a mature man – when he ate the fruit, he was in fact alive for 1000 years. All of Adam's children now pass into oblivion until the second coming of Christ. The perfect obedience of Jesus – after Adam, a second son of God - earned him the immortality denied to Adam.

Opposite: Revelation chapter 6 verses 12-17. The carnal world will not escape its ultimate destruction

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6. God allowed the Fall to happen. He did not intervene. He was “resting” for a “day”. During this time Satan and the wicked angels were active on earth (Genesis 3:1, 6:1-4; Revelation 12:1). The period of “rest” ended with the death of Adam after 1000 years. God then brought about the destruction of the Flood, which removed from the earth the evil which had been brought about by the wicked angels without destroying the Gnostic remnant of Noah and his family (Revelation 12:15-16). The millennial rule of Christ may be seen as another period of “rest” during which the wicked angels are not this time allowed to take control of the earth: Satan is bound during the restorative reign of the second Adam.

Opposite: Revelation chapter 8 verses 1-5. This world’s woes are the ongoing judgment of God’s fallen creation

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7. During the lifetime of Adam all the patriarchs up to the time of Noah were born. Noah was 14 years old when Adam died. Once Adam had died and God's period of "rest" was over, the Almighty began His salvage operation. It began with the olive-branch brought back by the dove after the Flood (Genesis 8:11), and will end with the Great White Throne Judgment (Revelation 20:11-18). The earth is and will be renewed over seven periods of time, each characterised as seven months – the final period being a grand jubilee (Deuteronomy 15:1). During six periods of seven months (mentioned in Revelation as 42 months or 1260 days) , God's judgment on the earth takes the form of the disastrous consequences of the Fall on the natural order.

Opposite: Revelation chapter 9 verse 14. Judgment spells the end of the world as we know it in the present age

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8. During the seventh period of seven months there is first a “silence” in heaven (Revelation 8:1): God “rests” completely for “half an hour”. This is the time of Armageddon and the Great Tribulation when Satan and the wicked angels once again briefly seek to gain the upper hand. The millennium then begins: a period of a thousand years during which the earth is ruled by a righteous regent as it should have been during the thousand years of Adam’s lifetime. God is able to rest easy in the knowledge that His son has things in hand. Finally, the last gasp of the forces of evil and those who choose to follow them into disobedience initiates the final judgment when they are consigned once and for all to the lake of fire.

Opposite: Revelation chapters 8-9. The fall and ruin of this world’s luminaries will be seen and heard by all

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9. Thus in the Apocalypse the 42 months of God's judgment on the natural order of creation is spoken of as 1260 days and 3½ years: 6 times 7 months. After the half-hour complete "rest" of God His Sabbath continues with the Jesus human son of God, the second Adam, ruling on behalf of his Father for 1000 years. Thus the 49 months of post-lapsarian creation is completed: the Great White Throne Judgment concludes a period of 7000 years from the death of Adam and the Flood, itself 7000 years after the creation of the Light of Gnosis. Creation is re-run and the world is renewed. A word of caution, however, is needed: the numbers are symbolic, as is the number 144,000 of the spiritual Israel.

Opposite: Revelation chapter 10 verse 3. John must deliver a bitter-sweet message of destruction and restitution

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10. The six periods of sin-induced catastrophe on the earth are however punctuated by six covenants which are part of God's salvage-operation: through Noah, through Abraham, through Moses, through Joshua, through David, and through Jesus. Each covenant is an agreement by means of which a faithful remnant is defined by its commitment to Higher Truth and sets itself apart from the world, so that it may not only be spared the second death in the lake of fire, but be re-admitted to Paradise and access to the Tree of Life (Revelation 20:11-15). In each case in the Biblical account the spiritual movement towards God is symbolised by a geographical movement, and each covenant is sealed by the blood of sacrifice.

Opposite: Revelation chapter 11 verse 3. The Old and New Testament witnesses were obscured by the Apostasy

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11. The remnant saved by the “old” covenant is symbolised in Revelation by the 144,000; those saved by the “new” covenant in Jesus (who offers himself as a new Passover lamb and by so doing reveals his understanding of God’s plan, and is therefore alone worthy to open the seals hiding the scroll of history) is represented by the “great crowd” (Revelation 7:9). Both are symbolised by the 24 elders seen in the tableau beyond the door opened onto heaven for John. The “old” covenants are typified by physical movement from an old geographical place to a new one: to Ararat, Haran, Sinai, Gilgal and Jerusalem. The “new” covenant is symbolised by Jesus’ physical passing into heaven itself at the Ascension.

Opposite: Revelation chapter 13. Untrammelled secular power acts as an agent of God’s judgment on the earth

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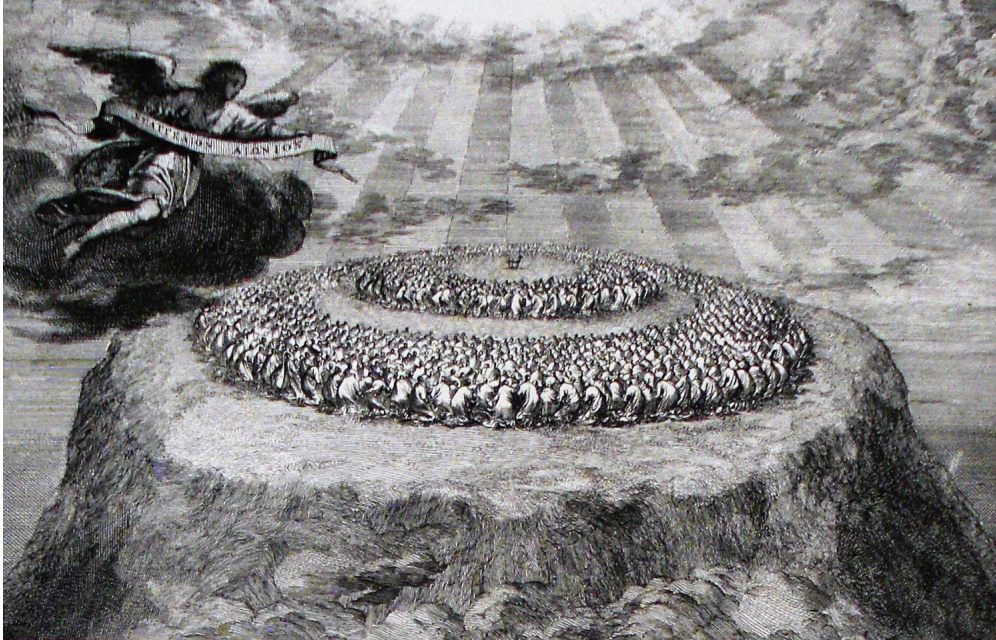


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12. The new Exodus began in fact with Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem. Thus the "great crowd" carrying their palms (Revelation 7:9) are compared implicitly to the throng who acknowledged Jesus as the Messiah and hailed him as he embarked on the series of events which will saw him impaled by the false religion of Babylon (Revelation: 7:4-10, 14:1). The New Jerusalem is founded on both the "old" and the "new" covenants (Revelation 21:12-14): Gnostics of all ages are able to recognise that higher Truth and imperative which inevitably leads to martyrdom at the hand of those religious Powers-that-Be which, though unmasked, have a Protean ability to form new images of themselves to worship (Revelation 13:13).

Opposite: Revelation chapter 14 verses 1-5. The Everlasting Gospel will be evident to all during the Millennium

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13. The Spiritual Israel of Gnosis is symbolised in Revelation by the 12 stars crowning creation's progenitrix Sophia (Revelation 12:1) – the faithful remnant of the “old” covenant – and by her child who, withdrawn from the world of carnality, is the ever-growing great crowd of adherents to the “new” covenant. The child's fare is Scripture truly understood. The two witnesses - the Old Testament and New Testaments – were suppressed by a corrupt religion during the Constantinian apostasy (Revelation 11). No human institution can be an infallible depository of Truth; all religions are corrupted by carnal considerations. The Gnostic must find the lampstand of true light and the olive tree of its sustenance wherever it is to be found.

Opposite: Revelation chapter 18. The Satanic mill of hypocrisy and state-sponsored religion will be destroyed

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14. Faith, as in the case of Abraham, is superior to obedience to the Law as long as the promise of immortality is yet unfulfilled. While access to the Commandments was through the procreative line of Israel, faith involved a renunciation of all rights proceeding from membership of that procreative line – as in Abraham’s willingness to sacrifice Isaac and his faith in an implied promise of resurrection. The New Israel of the 144,000 sealed in Revelation are virgins undefiled by women. That is, they have renounced salvation by means of the procreative line. It is these who will reign with Christ on earth for 1000 years – that is, for a time equivalent to the original life-span of Adam, thereby putting right his flawed dominion.

Opposite: Revelation chapter 20 verse 1. The forces of evil rampant during Adam’s lifetime will be restrained

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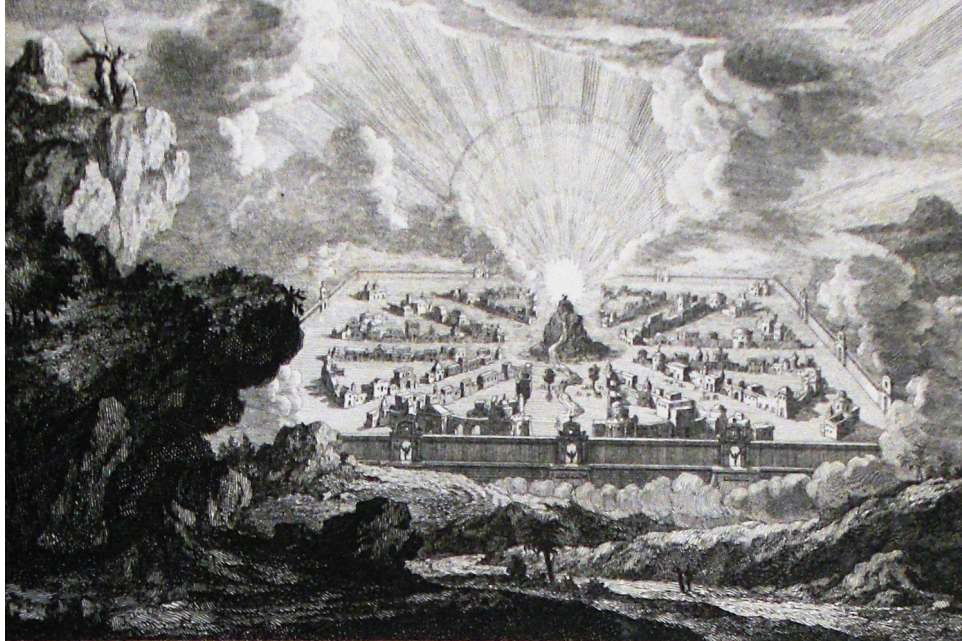


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15. During Jesus' millennial rule on earth, a "great crowd" of survivors of Armageddon and of the resurrected who were unable during their natural lifespan to access the proclaimed Gospel will be able to choose the "everlasting gospel" of obedience to God in circumstances where Satan is bound and Paradise restored on earth. The 144,000 co-regents will intercede as priests for their resurrected ancestors. The Danites, however, are excluded from the spiritual Israel (Judges 17:1-18:31). Their sin against the Holy Spirit was to use religion as a justification for evil. They will be resurrected at the end of the millennium, judged, then consigned to everlasting torment in the lake of fire - a diabolical immortality.

Opposite: Revelation chapter 21. New Heaven and Earth will be illumined directly by God's uncreated Light

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16. The scroll of the six days of creation is open for all to see in the Book of Genesis. The basis for God's salvage-operation is also available for all to see in the Law. The scroll of the six "days" of destruction is open in the Apocalypse of John. During the seventh "day" of a thousand years God will "rest" from the destruction and Satan will be bound so that the "everlasting gospel" can be seen, unobscured by the forces of evil (Revelation 14:6-7, Romans 1:19-22). In the final consummation, the scroll of creation upon which God's Word has been written will be rolled up, and all will begin anew. The Light of Gnosis, God's first creation, will once again illumine nature, and those passing the final test will be given access to the Tree of Life.

Opposite: Revelation chapter 22 verse 2. Those who remain true to the Gnosis will be granted immortality

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